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SOURCE: MOPR'S BANNERS ABROAD,
REPORT TO THE THIRD MOPR
CONGRESS OF THE SOVIET UNION,
BY H. STASSOVA. (Congress
held Feb. 15-19, 1931)

XIV. LEGAL AID TO THE PRISONERS

In assisting the prisoners with written word we must not forget also about the juridical help, but to our regret we cannot always give it to a sufficient extent, and we have to give directions to the comrades how to defend themselves. It is clear that when there were individual arrests, of even tens and hundreds, legal help and defence in court could be given. Today, however, when the arrests run into hundreds and thousands daily, this is not always possible.

Speaking about assistance to the imprisoned it is necessary to call attention to the political side of the question.

Some organisations do not understand that once a revolutionist falls into jail then in relation to the MOPR organisation it is immaterial whether he was a Communist, a Social-Democrat or an Anarchist, whether he was a "right deviationist" or a "leftist." Once he falls into the bourgeois jail then it is clear that he must have the possibility to defend himself against the bourgeois order. I will remind the comrades what situation we had in the Tsarist jails. Outside we fought to the death with Social-Revolutionaries and fought with the Anarchists in a most relentless manner. But when we fell into jail then we had a united front against the jail administration.

To our regret some of our organisations do not understand

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derstand this and we had to carry out a big struggle before they recognised our principles, because with the difference which was made in relation to the political prisoners we had a situation where our enemies, the administration and the Mensheviks, have utilised this, have utilised provocation, which brought decomposition into the ranks of the political prisoners.

On the other hand we consider that assistance must be given both to the political prisoners and their families. Here we had to fight with our American organisation, which did not understand for example that with the families of the political prisoners or the families of political emigrants, as for instance in the case of the Gastonia prisoners, it is necessary to give assistance.

They considered that this must not be done, that the families will exist without it.